

How Much Sleep is Enough?



Every person is unique and so are our sleep needs. But in today's busy world, how much sleep should we be getting each night?

Research suggests that most healthy adults need seven to nine hours of sleep each night. Children and adolescents need even more sleep than adults. The following is a breakdown of the recommended number of hours of sleep people need by age (*including naps):

INFANTS

(0 to 2 months): 10-1/2 to 18 hours*

(2-12 months): 14 to 15 hours*

TODDLERS/CHILDREN

(12-18 months): 13 to 15 hours*

(18 months-3 years): 12 to 14 hours*

(3-5 years): 11 to 13 hours*

(5-12 years): 9 to 11 hours

ADOLESCENTS

8-1/2 to 9-1/2 hours

ADULTS

7 to 9 hours

As children grow, they go through many changes, including changes in sleep. Children and teens, like adults, thrive on a regular sleep and wake schedule, even on the weekends. Sleep should follow a relaxing bedtime routine. The bedroom should be cool, dark and quiet. Getting a good night's rest may become more difficult as they grow older due to increased responsibilities and activities, the impact of TV, computers and caffeine or untreated sleep disorders. However, sleep is still a vital part of teens' performance, health and overall quality of life, and should still be a priority.

So, how do teens measure how much sleep they need? If a teen has trouble staying alert during school, long drives, while reading a book or in other quiet situations when sleepiness is often "unmasked," they probably are not getting enough quality sleep. Other signs of chronic sleep deprivation are irritability, difficulty concentrating or making decisions, loss of short-term memory or becoming overly aggressive. In fact, sleep deprivation is often misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Most sleep problems are treatable. If teens are having trouble getting the ZZZ's they need, it is important to see a doctor or other health professional.

Use the *Teen Sleep Diary* in this toolkit and take it with you for the visit.

For more information about this topic and other sleep issues and tips, visit the National Sleep Foundation's Web site at www.sleepfoundation.org.



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